2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

Prayers were also believed efficacious. As soon as a person became sick, his people prayed to God to help him and cure him. In addition, the priest prayed for the sick individual in the church (or in the home if the sick person could not go to the church) asking God to cure his servant from such and such a sickness and to give him peace. Candles were burned when the prayers were being said, but the burning of these candles was not supposed to have any curative power. "This service is performed more for the old people and although it is said to be *vetur rabota* [plumb foolishness], yet many times it helps the sick to recover. Nowadays people do not believe in God and this is why many people die, and also that is why life in general is as it is, so heavy."

In looking for the causes of illness the peasants also turned to the Almighty who, it was formerly believed, sent sickness as a punishment upon individuals for wrongs they had done. While many people in 1937 had the same attitude, there were some who accepted the germ explanation. But even some of these, if a sickness dragged on and on, suspected that God might be meting out some punishment, germs or no germs. Here was the way they so often put it: "And God has the right to punish the people, for now they have begun not to believe in him and not to listen to him. Now the people are forgetting God and are with the Devil."

The villagers knew the names of only a few diseases and classified all illnesses under one of these few. The worst disease was the "plague" (typhoid fever), then tuberculosis, *sharka* (pox), scarlatina, and finally, "a bad cold." The doctor used a more scientific classification in listing the causes of death. Her report for 1936 showed that thirty-three people died within the year. Diseases accounting for four deaths each were tuberculosis, nervous disorders, and pneumonia; those accounting for two deaths each were scarlatina, whooping cough, diphtheria, cancer, heart disease, old age, and childbirth (mother); those causing one death each were childbirth (infant), typhus, erysipelas, bronchitis, diarrhea, digestive ailment, and accident. Her scientific approach did not necessarily mean that the doctor's recovery percentage was very high, because patients were brought too late for proper treatment. Therefore the peasants said: "And

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

753 many times the doctors cannot help. They cannot give a second soul to the sick. If he has some more days to live, he will live; if not, he will die. Doctors are not God and even the doctors die as well."

● 761 In keeping with this fatalistic attitude toward sickness, the peasants accepted death as simply as they would any life process. Before I began my study of Dragalevtsy I was already familiar with the peasants' conception of death. One account which had proved helpful in gaining this understanding appeared in the *Bulgarian-British Review* back in 1931, and was written by Mrs. A. Vessova. She said in part:

775 761 "Death to these people is not considered the end; it is but the continuation of the earthly life in another sphere—the invisible world. The bounden duty of the family is to prepare the dying for their long journey so that they will not have to roam disconsolately in the darkness without finding their way to their new surroundings. Of the dying person they repeat to one another that he or she is now a traveler. Their first duty is to light a candle which they place above the head of the patient, so that they may not see it, should they happen to be conscious. Should the patient be allowed to die without lighting this particular candle, it is considered by the villagers to bring great discredit on the family. The meaning of the candle is that when the soul starts upon its long journey it has to pass through dark passages, and the candle will light the way.

". . . As soon as the neighbors hear the announcement [of the death] they immediately throw away all the water found in the house, and proceed to the fountain to replenish all their vessels. The same procedure takes place in the house of the deceased. There is no clear explanation for this custom or its real meaning, but it is supposed to symbolize, as do other customs, that as the water flows smoothly and evenly, so the voyage of the soul will be made smooth and easy.

764 775 "The peasants believe that though invisible the soul continues to keep the form of the body which it has just left. For this reason the deceased is laid to rest in his grave in his ordinary clothing. Led by his or her angel, for they believe that every human being at his

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1

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that this is always a good thing to do; it is a general prophylactic. I do not know whether this belief exists unaccompanied by notions, however vague, of infection, but it may have an independent origin. We therefore often work on the assumption that force can be played off against force, and occasionally specify that such and such a thing is a force or has virtue. It would be interesting to know whether an amulet or a magical herb (e.g. a plant gathered on St John's Eve, by moonlight, after divination and so on) is supposed to owe its virtue to these circumstances or that it is only recognised by these signs. I have had conflicting answers to queries in this direction. Certain amulets lose their power after a season, e.g. the skin sloughed by a snake lasts only for a year (Bosnia), a bat as a love charm cannot repeat the reaction, although it should not be carelessly thrown away. Perhaps the only real difference between the peasant's concept and that of the educated person lies in the latter's categories which separate moral from physical force, but this is a point which will be undecided until it receive systematic investigation by ethnographic psychologists.

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The soul of a man lives in his heart.[1] The soul has two parts or forms, the shade and the spirit (*senka* and *duh*); the first is seen when there is light and warmth, the second only when it is cold. If a man loses his shadow he ceases to breathe. In sleep the shadow leaves the body and the spirit, and afterwards reports to them all it has seen on its supernatural journeys.[2] *Dok mi kuca u kostima duša* is equivalent to 'while my heart beats in my body'. 'Everything comes from the head. It is therefore the centre of all the movements of the organs.' 'Soul goes into the body in the form of air, and into the lungs and the heart.' Soul gives life to the body and does not come out of a healthy body. 'His soul is in his nose' is as much as to say that a man is near

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[1] Cf. Zb. XIX, p. 151; D. Marinov, *Vera i Religiozni narodni običai*, Sb.N.U. XXVII (1914), pp. 224, 225.

[2] J. M. Pavlović, *Život i Običaji Narodni u Kragujevačkoj Jasenici*, S.E.Z. XXII, p. 251.